



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

LAND EAST OF EBSWORTH STREET, MOSTON, M40 9WB

AUGUST 2025

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

LAND EAST OF EBSWORTH STREET, MOSTON, M40 9WB

A report for

Moston Superstore Limited

5-7 Pym Street,
Manchester,
M40 9WE

Report by



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 REASON FOR SURVEY

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Land East of Ebsworth Street, Moston, M40 9WB.

The assessment is required for a planning application for the erection of a two-storey retail unit. The development will be limited to an existing carpark, however, some vegetation removal may be required on site boundaries to allow access.

A biodiversity survey and report has been completed to provide a baseline of the site conditions and to determine whether the proposals would result in significant impacts to protected habitats or species.

This report addresses potential ecological impacts which may arise from the proposals. This includes;

- Habitat assessment (UKHabs survey).
- Potential breeding bird issues associated with the site.
- Bat Roost Assessment
- Impact on Designated Sites

1.2 SITE LOCATION

Site location info - The site is situated within an urban industrial area of Moston, Manchester. The surrounding landscape is predominantly residential. The sites central National Grid Reference is SD 8702 0189. An aerial image of the area subject to survey is shown below.

Figure 1.1: Aerial image of land east of Ebsworth Street, with red line survey area



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK SURVEY

A desk-based data search using freely available information was undertaken.

The Multi Agency Geographical Information Centre www.magic.gov.uk was also referred to in respect of statutory sites, GCN licence returns, and European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) issued in respect of GCN and bats.

A review of the Manchester City Council planning portal was undertaken in relation to historic planning applications within the vicinity of the site.

In addition, Pennine Ecological's dataset was referenced which contains extensive records of species and habitats generated from surveys undertaken since the company's formation in 1996.

It should be noted that species records over 500m of the site are not reproduced here as they are considered to have no association with the site and are beyond the sphere of influence for this proposal.

2.2 HABITAT SURVEY

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) survey (UKHab Ltd, 2020) of the habitats within the red line boundary was undertaken on 07/08/2025. The site's habitats were mapped, and vascular plant species were recorded and given a DAFOR ((Dominant (D), Abundant (A), Frequent (F), Occasional (O), Rare (R)) score. Each habitat was given a distinctiveness and habitat condition score (Natural England, 2023). Secondary codes have been applied where required to describe the primary habitats. Habitats have been mapped using the fine-scale minimum mapping unit.

2.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS .

2.3.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken on the 07/08/2025 following the methodology outlined in Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines (2023). All trees on site were assessed from ground level and using close focusing binoculars where required.

2.3.2 Breeding Bird Assessment

The site was assessed for its potential to support breeding birds. This included identifying any evidence of historic nesting within the site.

Any bird activity within the site was recorded whilst undertaking the site survey.

2.3.3 Great Crested Newt Assessment

The site was evaluated by means of desk study and the surveyor's specialist knowledge of the species, in particular its terrestrial habits and breeding requirements. In addition, ponds within 250m of the site were subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment.

The index applies ten suitability indices which are multiplied together to produce a score for each pond (Oldham et al, 2000). Based on the score a pond suitability for supporting GCN is applied to each pond (see Table 2.1 below).

Note: The HSI system is not sufficiently precise to conclude that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not support newts.

Table 2.1: HSI scoring

HSI Score	Pond Suitability
< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
> 0.8	Excellent

Other Protected and Notable Species:

Consideration was given to other protected and notable species potentially present. The following species / species groups have been scoped out for further assessment, with brief reasoning provided below:

- **Badger** – The site lacks any significant habitat parcels which could be suitable for badger sett creation. The site is situated within an developed urban area with poor connection to other suitable habitats for badger. The species is assumed to be absent locally.
- **Reptiles** – There are no records of reptiles within 500m of the site and the site is not connected to any areas with known reptile populations. The habitat on site provides limited value for reptiles. Therefore, reptiles are highly likely to be absent from the site and locally
- **Riparian Mammals** – There are no watercourses or waterbodies within 100m of the site. The site comprises habitats that are of no value to riparian mammals. Due to the lack of connectivity to any watercourses or waterbodies, riparian mammals are considered to be absent from the site and locally.
- **Invertebrates** – There are no notable invertebrate records within 500m of the site. The site is highly unlikely to support notable invertebrate assemblages.

These species are not discussed further within this report.

2.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS

The site survey was conducted on 04/08/2025. Full access to the site and surrounding area was possible. The habitats on site were accurately identified and condition assessed.

There are considered to be no limitations to the evaluations and recommendations provided within this report.

2.5 SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE

The surveyor and author of this report, Marcus Hogg, is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (QCIEEM) and has over five years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills include the following.

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey/UKHabs Survey.
- Proficient field botanist.
- Breeding bird survey.
- Mammal surveys including surveys for badger and preliminary bat roost survey. Natural England Bat Class License: 2022-10305-CL17-BAT.
- Extensive experience in great crested newt (GCN) surveying. Natural England Class Licence: 2022-10622-CL08-GCN.

- Ground-level and aerial tree assessments.

3. RESULTS

3.1 DESK STUDY

3.1.1 Statutory Sites

The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is approximately 2.6km east of the site. The site is designated for its diversity of aquatic flora and riparian habitats.

The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones¹ (IRZ's) has been reviewed with the following determination:

"The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin. Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin."

Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 400m north of the site.

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Sites

There are no known non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site.

3.1.3 Protected / Notable Habitats and Species

One European Protected Species License record was identified approximately 200m southeast of the site associated with St John Thursby Community College. This was for the destruction of a place of rest for common pipistrelle active between 2009-2010.

3.2 HABITAT SURVEY

3.2.1 Habitats Present

- u1b (33) Developed land, sealed-surface (*line of trees*)
- g4 (32, 33) Modified grassland (*scattered trees, line of trees*)

3.2.2 General Description

The site comprises a tarmac carpark with vegetated grass verges, lines of trees and scattered trees defining its boundaries to the east, south and west.

3.2.3 Habitat Descriptions

(i) g4 (32, 33) Modified grassland (*Scattered scrub, scattered rushes, scattered trees*)

The habitat comprises species-poor modified grassland, with perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) being dominant (D) across much of the site. Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), and common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) were all recorded as frequent (F). Common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), orache (*Atriplex patula*),

¹ The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites

greater plantain (*Plantago major*), and alder saplings (*Alnus glutinosa*) were noted as occasional (O).

Within the grassland in the east of the site is a line of trees comprising abundant rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and occasional grey alder (*Alnus incana*) and black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*).

In the south of the site there are scattered trees including semi-mature silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and rowan.

(ii) u1b (33) Developed land, sealed-surface (*line of trees*)

This habitat comprises a tarmac carpark.

To the west of the habitat is a line of trees comprising semi-mature small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*) D.

3.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS

3.3.1 Bat Assessment

(i) Preliminary Roost Assessment

There are no buildings on the site.

All trees and shrubs on the site were assessed as having **Negligible** potential for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features.

(ii) Bat Habitat Suitability

The scattered trees and lines of trees on the site may have some limited value for foraging bats, however, due to the developed, urban nature of the site and surrounding area bat activity is anticipated to be low.

Habitat suitability was assessed as **Poor**.

3.3.2 Bird Assessment

No bird's nests were identified on the site.

No birds were observed during the site visit.

The line of trees and scattered trees on the site are likely to be of value for nesting birds.

Habitat associated with the site is considered to be of 'Moderate' suitability for breeding birds.

3.3.3 Great Crested Newts

(i) Pond Scoping

There are no ponds within 250m of the site.

Due to the absence of suitable breeding ponds in the vicinity of the site presence of great crested newt can be reasonably discounted from the site.

4. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 DESK STUDY

4.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of Rochdale Canal SAC and SSSI which is approximately 2.6km east of the site.

The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's) has been reviewed with the following determination:

"The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin. Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin."

Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 400m north of the site.

(i) Recommendations: Statutory Designated Sites

Consultation with Natural England is not required with respect to the potential impacts on Rochdale Canal SAC and SSSI.

Due to the limited scope of the development, distance and lack of functional connectivity to Rochdale Canal SAC and SSSI and Boggart Hole Clough LNR, no impact is anticipated on designated sites.

4.1.2 Non-statutory Designated Sites

There are no known non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site.

(i) Recommendations: Non-statutory Designated Sites

No impacts on non-statutory designated sites are anticipated as a result of the development.

4.2 HABITATS

The existing habitats on site are of low to medium distinctiveness.

Due to the size and current condition of the habitats on site, the value of the current sites habitats cannot exceed 'site' ecological value, with impacts not extending beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

The development will need to ensure appropriate compensation for the loss of habitats.

(i) Recommendations: Habitats

A biodiversity net gain (BNG) metric calculation will be undertaken, which will provide a baseline habitat value and indicate how the proposal will achieve a measurable 10% net gain, in accordance with national and local planning policy.

4.3 BATS

Bats are comprehensively protected under European legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

The trees on site have **Negligible** bat roost potential.

The habitats associated with the site and surrounding area are of poor suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

The habitat value of the site for bats cannot exceed 'site' ecological value, with impacts not extending beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

(i) Recommendations: Bats

No further surveys or mitigation are required for bats.

4.4 BIRDS

All breeding birds (with only minor exceptions) are offered various levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

Nesting provisions are provided by the scattered trees and lines of trees on the site.

The site is not capable of supporting a bird assemblage above 'site' ecological value.

(i) Recommendations: Birds

Before any development and in order to minimize impacts on birds any site disturbance including any removal of vegetation should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e. between September 1st and February 28th. Following the felling of trees/scrub/shrubs, piles of brash should be removed from the site, failure to do so could provide potential nest sites if left in situ until the following breeding season.

If vegetation removal of the above features is anticipated during the breeding season (March 1st to August 31st), then checks should be made to establish any nesting or breeding activity, prior to removal.

Additional bird nesting provisions should be included upon the new buildings. These enhancement measures would contribute to achieving an overall biodiversity net gain for this proposal.

Bird nesting provisions could include:

- Standard bird nest boxes which could support common garden and farmland bird species (e.g. 1B Schwegler nest box).

REFERENCES

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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Kirby, J et al (2000) Key Habitat Attributes for Birds and Bird Assemblages in England. English Nature Research Report no. 359.

Stace, C., (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles (Second edition)*. Cambridge University Press.

UKHabs Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

Online References

Joint Nature Conservancy Council - DEFRA (2006) Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England. DEFRA/Natural England - <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-habitats/> latest access 10/08/2025.

Google Earth. Accessed various dates. Latest access 10/08/2025.

Natural England – MAGIC. Accessed various dates. Latest access 08/08/2025. <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Appendix A: Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Developed land, sealed-surface.



Photograph 4: Scattered trees (rowan) on the southern boundary of the site.



Photograph 2: Modified grassland and line of trees in the east of the site.



Photograph 5: Line of trees on the western boundary of the site.



Photograph 3: Scattered trees (silver birch) on the southern boundary of the site.

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1 – UKHabs Baseline Map



Appendix C: Condition Assessment Sheets

Grassland Low Distinctiveness Condition Assessment Sheet

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	No	
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	No	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	No	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Yes	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Yes	
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			No
Number of criteria passed			4
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/7	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	Poor	

Individual Tress Condition Assessment Sheet

Habitat Description															
Group 1 - Silver birch x3 dbh 15cm, 20cm and 30cm. Group 2 - rowan x2 dbh 20cm and 15cm															
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.															
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.															
On-site or off-site, site name and location				Survey date and Surveyor name											
				Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)											
Limitations (if applicable)				Habitat parcel reference											
Condition Assessment Criteria				Grid reference											
				Group 1	Group 2										
				Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)	
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).			Yes	Yes										
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).			Yes	Yes										
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .			No	No										
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.			No	No										
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.			No	No										
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.			Yes	Yes										
Number of criteria passed				3	3										
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score		Score Achieved x/√											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)													
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)		3	3										
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)													
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.															

Line of trees Condition Assessment Sheet

Habitat Description												
Line of trees 1 - Eastern boundary of the site (Black locust, rowan and grey alder). Line of trees 2 - Western boundary of the site (small-leaved lime)												
See the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook ¹ . For further clarifications please refer to the Handbook. Where ancient and veteran trees are present within the line of trees, see Footnote 2 for standing advice.												
On-site or off-site, site name and location		Survey date and Surveyor name										
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)										
Limitations (if applicable)		Habitat parcel reference										
		Grid reference										
Condition Assessment Criteria		1	2									
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A	At least 70% of trees are native species.	Yes	Yes									
B	Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.	No	No									
C	One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	No									
D	There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice ² .	No	No									
E	At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	No	No									
Number of criteria passed		1	1									
Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score		Score Achieved x/√								
Passes 5 criteria		Good (3)										
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)										
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)		Yes	Yes							